



Randy Gugenheim

By the grace and mercy of God, The Father, through Jesus Christ, His Son, Our Lord, I was baptized in The Name of The Father, The Son, and The Holy Spirit in June of last year. Prior to the baptism, I was reading

The Bible intermittently and reading Christian literature, while seeking work and a home. Leading up to the baptism and after the baptism, The Holy Spirit was poured out upon me, and I read The Bible to an even greater extent.

I had never been involved deeply in any church, and after the baptism, I was allowed to volunteer in various Christian ministries. Volunteering in several ministries with a focus on the poor was a humbling and heart-wrenching experience. I had gone through this before in India nearly ten years ago, but being a first-hand witness to the gatherings of the poor in my own country was even more disturbing. Reading the Gospels, the Prophets and the Torah, as I did this service, continued to justify my concern. Unfortunately, I was unable to stay with either of the churches with which I was volunteering.

My fascination with The Catholic Church increased, when I confessed my sins to a man that was not a priest over five years ago. I had taken a college course many years ago, titled *Survey of World Religions*, in which, we discussed the seven sacraments of The Catholic Church. I reflected on the sacraments throughout my life, leading up to my presence in Bloomington. I recall talking with two Catholics, while I was in Bloomington, about the power of confession. Furthermore, the priest's role in the sacraments and in The Church has been a continuous mystery to me throughout my life before I ever even took that college course.

I look forward to utilizing all of the sacraments, especially the source and summit of those sacraments, The Blessed Sacrament, The Holy Eucharist, as I diligently follow the path of sanctification laid out for me by God, The Father, His Son, Jesus Christ, Our Lord, and The Holy Spirit, to join The Church Triumphant, through Christ, Our Lord.

I would like to thank The King's Men for praying The Rosary with me within the first week that I arrived in Bloomington. I have since prayed The Rosary that they gave me consistently with the help of their examples and the literature that they promoted, which stressed the importance of the prayer. My prayer life has improved through the use of other Catholic prayers that have been shared with me over the last several weeks through The King's Men and the RCIA Director, Scott Benningfield. Praise Christ our Lord!

The History of RCIA



RCIA (Rite of Christian Initiation for Adults), which came out of Vatican II, is the modern name for the **catechumenate**, which is a system that was developed in the Early Church to prepare and initiate converts into the Church. The word catechumen is derived from a Greek word, *katekhoumenos*, which means "one being instructed," in this case, one receiving instruction in the principles of Christianity as preparation for baptism and/or confirmation.

After the Resurrection, Jesus foresaw the need to teach others when He commissioned His disciples, "Go...and make disciples of all nations, baptizing them in the name of the Father, and of the Son, and of the Holy Spirit, **teaching them to observe all that I have commanded you.**"

It is a practice that developed slowly in the early years of Christianity. Initially, of course, the teaching about Jesus was taught by word of mouth, especially by the twelve Apostles who, as priests, had the power to baptize converts into this new faith. However, over time, as doctrine was slowly developed, it became important for the catechumens to be well prepared to protect them against the dangers of falling away from their newfound faith when persecution began.

As the faith grew and more churches were built, some restrictions were placed on the catechumens. One practice permitted them to remain in the church during the first part of the Mass, the Liturgy of the Word, but they had to be dismissed before the Eucharist. This practice is actually still in use in some churches today, the Cathedral of St. James in Seattle being one example. After the Liturgy of the Word, the catechumens leave the sanctuary to go to another location where their weekly RCIA instruction takes place.

St. Cyril of Jerusalem wrote numerous homilies targeted for the catechumeneate; a program for converts was largely structured by St. Augustine of Hippo. Gregory the Great had a significant impact on catechesis during the early Middle Ages. However, by the later Middle Ages, the catechumeneate had gradually disappeared. Children were baptized at birth and fewer adults converted. The Church in Europe faced challenges with the large-scale conversions of franks and Germanic peoples who were largely uneducated. Instruction was more focused on practical ways of living the faith.

Interestingly, this led to the gradual development of religious art, including stained glass windows, which became a way of teaching the faith to those with little or no formal education.

The Roamin' Catholic

By Bryan Wells

Bryan Wells is a parishioner of St. John the Apostle who is a student at Franciscan University of Steubenville. He is presently spending a semester abroad in Gaming, Austria, living and studying in the *Kartause Maria Thronus Iesu*, a fourteenth century Carthusian Monastery. This, and subsequent articles, though condensed, is taken verbatim from his travel blog.



Bryan arrives in Gaming, Austria, on Feb. 2, 2014

As we drive into Gaming, the Kartause, a fourteenth century Carthusian Monk Monastery, comes into view. The white walls and red roof, the huge stone steeple and magnificent church, all set on a back-drop of the foothills of the alps. Looking all around you, you realize why "the hills are alive."



Every once in a while, when I'm walking around the grounds of the Kartause, I just have to stop and think and take it all in. Here I am, in Austria, with great people, living in a monastery, for four months. I am so incredibly blessed to have this opportunity and I still have some trouble believing it. Thanks be to God that I get to have this incredible opportunity.



For our first excursion the school took us all to Melk, Austria to take a look and have Mass at Melk Abbey. We began with a tour of the museum part which contained many relics from throughout all of church history, including a relic of the True Cross. We finished our

tour in the chapel which proved to be more beautiful than any of us could have imagined. We had altars dedicated to saints (with their bodies buried inside) on our right and left, spiraling gold pillars all around us, and St. Peter and St. John above the tabernacle. The best part, we were able to celebrate Mass in this gorgeous place.

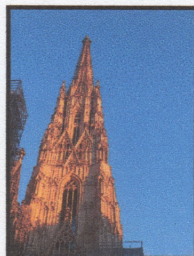
On the way home, a group of us was sitting at the back of the bus talking about this experience and how it impacted us. A couple of the students were saying about during Mass they were awestruck with the magnificent beauty all around us, however the real beauty was yet to come. They were saying how during the consecration, when the priest raises the Host and says "The Body of Christ," THAT was more beautiful than any of the gold or the statues around them.

At first, that really struck me, yet when I began to think about it, it's so true. Jesus gave us himself in the Eucharist. No matter where we may be, in Melk Abbey or our local parish, the same
Sharing the Catholic Journey

May 2014

Jesus is present and is more beautiful than all the earth. What an incredible gift.

One thing I find incredibly sad is that the people over here are surrounded by so much history and beautiful churches, yet they remain mainly empty, especially when it comes to youth. The faith over here is taught and remains a culturally important part of life, however few of the people have learned to take this faith as their own and incorporate it into their own life. The Church in Europe is in desperate need of a revival, especially among the youth. I pray that God can use all of us students here, present and future, to be able to carry the Gospel message with us wherever we go throughout Europe. All it takes is one person at a time to realize the rich and beautiful faith they already have for a fire to sweep across many....



This weekend, our school took our first overnight excursion to the capital of Austria, Vienna. We arrived early Friday morning and began our weekend (like every other weekend) with a Mass inside yet another incredible

church. we ran into another group of Franciscan students who had heard about some underground jazz club (literally underground, underneath a church). So we decided to stick with them and check it out. After going through a sketchy part of town we found the "Jazzland" sign...only the entrance was boarded up and abandoned. However, since we were there we decided to go look around the church (as with every other church we saw) which was on top of a small hill. Going in, it was nothing like any of the other churches we had seen thus far. It was very simple, no ornate decorations, with just an altar, crucifix, and a tabernacle. Yet, it was beautiful in it's own way. It was very very humble but the Glory of God was still present. The group of about fifteen of us got the desire to all pray together in this out of the way church and so we all sang the Chaplet of Divine Mercy together in front of the tabernacle with our singing echoing off the empty walls. I noticed halfway through there was an older gentleman in the back who was recording us on his phone, but I didn't give it much thought. After, he approached us and explained that he was the night watch for this particular church and he was moved to see us all singing and praying together here in this chapel. After talking with him for a little while about the history of the church and who we all were, we asked him who he was and a little about himself. From what we understood (some things he said to us were very hard to understand), we got that his name was Boxlough (that's how it sounds anyway) and he and his family were from Poland. Although it was a very simple conversation, God blessed each one of us in that moment, in the communion we were able to share, and ended up being the best part of a weekend spent in the capital of Austria.

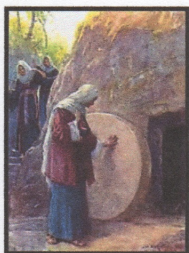


Bryan's next two weekend trips were to Switzerland and Slovenia. Bryan's Blog can be read in full at : <http://blog.travelpod.com/members/bwells>

The Wonder of these forty days....from the Resurrection to the Ascension

The Resurrection is the most important event for Christians – without the Resurrection, Jesus would have been considered, at most, to be a prophet. However, He not only appeared to His disciples and followers, He continued to be with them for **40 days**. Think of it! They didn't simply get a glimpse of the Risen Lord; they walked with Him, they talked with Him, they ate with Him, and He continued to teach them – for **40 days**!

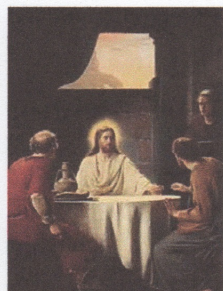
That number, **40**, is of special significance in the Bible – the **40** days of the flood in Noah's time, the **40** years in the wilderness for Moses and his people, the **40** days that Jesus fasted in the wilderness before He began his ministry, and now **40** days of continuing His ministry in His resurrected body.



Interestingly, it was to the women that Jesus first appeared – not to the men. He appeared first to Mary Magdalene and then to the other women who had stood by the

cross during the Crucifixion. There is an ancient tradition that He first appeared to His mother, Mary, then to Mary Magdalene.

Luke gives the only account of His appearance to two men, one named Cleopas, who were on the road to Emmaus, about seven miles from Jerusalem. When He asks why they are sad, they talk to him about the recent death of Jesus the Nazarene and how they had had such hopes that He would be the one to redeem Israel. They have discounted the women's account of His having risen from the dead. Not realizing that they are walking with the risen Jesus, "beginning with Moses and all of the prophets...He interpreted to them what referred to Him in all the scriptures." (Luke 24: 27) As evening approached, they urged him to stay with them. "So He went in to stay with them. And it happened that when He was with them at table, He took bread, said the blessing, broke it, and gave it to them. With that their eyes were opened and they recognized him, but He vanished from their sight. (Luke 24:29 –31)



Later that evening, He appeared in the midst of eleven of His disciples, who were hiding in a locked room, most likely the Upper Room, "Jesus said to them, 'Peace be with you.' And when He had said this, He breathed on them and said to them, 'Receive the Holy Spirit. Whose sins you forgive are forgiven, and whose sins you retain are retained.'" (John 20:22–23) The only disciple not there was Thomas, and he said, "Unless I see the mark of the nails in His

hands and put my finger into the nailmarks and put my hand into His side, I will not believe."

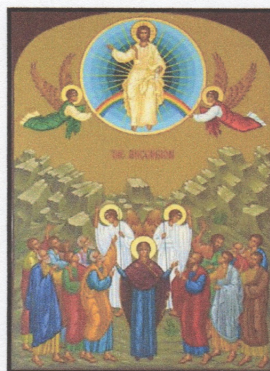
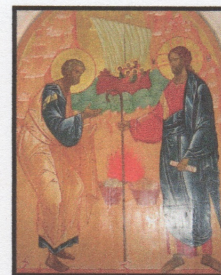
A week later, Jesus appeared again. This time Thomas was present. Jesus said to Thomas, "Put your finger here and see my hands, and bring your hand and put it into my side, and do not be unbelieving, but believe." Thomas answered and said to him, "My Lord and my God!" Jesus said to him, "Have you come to believe because you have seen me? Blessed are those who have not seen and have believed." (John 20:27–29)



The Gospel of John gives the most detail about Jesus's appearance to seven of His disciples at the Sea of Galilee. It is strikingly similar to the events described in Luke when Jesus called Peter to be a disciple.

In both accounts, the men had been fishing all night without success. Then they see a man by the shore who tells them to lower their nets again, and their nets are filled with fish. In the second account in John, when they realize that the man on the shore is Jesus, Peter jumps into the sea.

In a very moving account, Jesus gave Peter a chance to redeem himself for having denied Him three times on the evening of His arrest. "Jesus said to Simon Peter, "Simon, son of John, do you love me more than these?" He said to Him, "Yes Lord, you know that I love you." He said to him, "Feed my lambs." He then asked him a second time "Simon, son of John, do you love me?" He said to Him, "Yes, Lord, you know that I love you." He said to him, "Tend my sheep." He said to him the third time, "Simon, son of John, do you love me?" Peter was distressed...."Lord, you know everything; you know that I love you." Jesus said to him, "Feed my sheep."....then He said to him, "Follow me."



As the time of the Ascension drew near, Jesus prepared His disciples, telling them to remain in Jerusalem, that they would receive power when the Holy Spirit came upon them. "Go, therefore, and make disciples of all nations, baptizing them in the name of the Father, and of the Son, and of the Holy Spirit, teaching them to observe all that I have commanded you. And behold, I am with you always, until the end of the age." (Matthew 28:19–20)

This time the disciples were not lost or frightened. Returning to the upper room, they "devoted themselves with one accord to prayer, together with some women, and Mary the Mother of Jesus, and His brothers." (Acts 1: 14) They took a step forward in their ministry by choosing a successor Matthias as a successor for Judas. Pentecost was nearly upon them.